

## Region VI Fatherhood Activities & Initiatives

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### Regional Activities & Initiatives

#### National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) Golden Dads Campaign

The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) held the second annual Golden Dads Campaign. Golden Dads is a campaign to acknowledge and reward everyday dads from across the country as they interact with their children in zoos, parks, malls, museums, and other public places where families gather.

For the 2004 campaign, NFI combed hot spots in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. to award a total of 1,000 great dads across the country. Campaign volunteers from NFI and local fatherhood organizations and sponsors searched places like ESPN Zone, Six Flags America, and several city zoos to find the Golden Dads.

As each dad was "caught" being a good dad - changing a diaper, pushing a stroller, comforting a crying child, playing catch - a campaign volunteer awarded him with a special prize package that included a preview sampler of the upcoming *Rendezvous Entertainment* album, *Golden Slumbers*, *A Father's Love*, and several sponsor-donated prizes, including gift cards for Auntie Anne's pretzels.

#### The National Fatherhood Initiative's Southwest Region Office (NFISW)

The National Fatherhood Initiative established its first state office in Austin, TX in May of 2000 to operate a statewide initiative on behalf of the Office of the Governor. Since opening its doors, the National Fatherhood Initiative Southwest Region Office (NFISW) has laid the groundwork for expansion throughout the southwestern U.S.

NFISW has accomplished the following:

- Generated more than \$3 million in donated television and radio airtime from stations across Texas. The re-tagged PSAs have consistently run in 17 of the 19 Texas media markets;
- Conducted 13 Leadership Summits on Fatherhood in partnership with community leaders, several of which led to the start of seven grassroots fatherhood initiatives in Texas; Communities that launched initiatives included El Paso County, Lubbock County (South Plains Region), Hays County, Tarrant County (Forth Worth-Arlington), San Antonio, Abilene, McLennan and Falls Counties (Waco, Texas) and Hidalgo County (Texas-Mexico border area near McAllen and Brownsville);
- Conducted 46 workshops or trainings institutes in which staff from 692 community-based organizations received training on how to create, manage, market, or evaluate a program or service for fathers. Participants in these workshops represented many sectors of community life, including the non-profit, government, education, business, health, faith, philanthropic, military, civic, and law-enforcement sectors;
- Distributed more than 30,000 pieces of fatherhood literature to organizations and individuals; and
- Provided information on the Texas initiative, technical assistance, or referrals to more than 2,800 individuals and organizations seeking information on fatherhood.

Building on the success of the Texas initiative, NFISW has expanded its work into Arizona, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Nebraska. In addition to the Texas initiative, NFISW staff is using

NFI's "3E" strategy (educate, equip, and engage) to reach fathers and families through the following projects:

- *Louisiana Six-parish Project*

NFISW staff trained community-leader volunteers in a six-parish area of southern Louisiana to implement NFI's Long Distance Dads program for incarcerated fathers and NFI's Doctor Dad Healthcare and Home Safety Workshop for fathers. Through August of 2003, 383 fathers participated in the Long Distance Dads program. As a part of the project, more than 750 children were able to visit and connect with their incarcerated fathers.

- *Doctor Dad Curriculum Evaluation*

NFISW staff is conducting a field test and evaluation of NFI's Doctor Dad Healthcare and Home Safety Workshop for fathers in partnership with the School of Social Work at the University of Texas. Organizations in Arizona, Oklahoma, and Washington have been trained on the curriculum and are conducting workshops for fathers. The evaluation includes pre and post-assessments of knowledge gained by fathers and follow-up interviews with dads to identify the impact of the program on the fathers and their families. The evaluation team is also conducting interviews with the organizations implementing the curriculum to identify the impact of the curriculum on these groups.

- *NFI's National Community-based Programming*

NFISW staff develops, evaluates, and refines NFI's community-based programming, which includes fatherhood curricula, workshops, and other products and services for community-based organizations. NFISW staff has developed and honed NFI's Community Mobilization Model and, as noted above, is conducting a field test and evaluation of NFI's Doctor Dad Healthcare and Home Safety Workshop for fathers. Staff has recently completed the design of a workshop on how to implement NFI's Community Mobilization Model.

#### *State Coverage*

NFISW currently serves Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

#### **Responsible Fatherhood Development and Fragile Families Capacity Building in Public Housing Authorities - A project of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has made a major commitment to outreach to the fathers of children living within its public housing communities for the purpose of encouraging reunification of strong nuclear families to benefit and enhance the well-being of their children.

The Responsible Fatherhood and Fragile Families Capacity Building Project, managed by the National Partnership for Community Leadership (NPCL), is one such project. There are (3) three components of the project's objectives: (1) Conduct a series of on-site focus groups/consultations at Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and other HUD-designated sites; (2) Develop a Best Practice/Reference Guide; and (3) Develop and Conduct Fatherhood Development Skills and Capacity Building Workshops. Dallas, Texas was selected as one of (7) seven cities involved in the third project objective, "Develop and Conduct Fatherhood Development Skills and Capacity Building Workshops." A brief overview of the third project objective is described below:

NPCL shall design and implement up to seven capacity building workshops to enhance, enrich and/or start up responsible fatherhood and fragile families support programs and activities at public housing authority settings. Workshop participants shall include, but not be limited to local PHA officials, other partners, state and community staff, as well as public housing resident leaders. NPCL shall convene these workshops in PHAs of the following initial seven (7) cities approved by HUD and commence recruitment and promotion of the workshops:

Los Angeles, California  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Tampa, Florida  
Baltimore, Maryland  
West Chester, Pennsylvania  
Columbia, South Carolina  
Dallas, Texas

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## **State of Arkansas**

### **Little Rock, Arkansas Fatherhood Initiative**

The City of Little Rock's Welfare to Work Competitive Grant includes a component that offers assistance to fathers who are behind or struggling with their child support and want to avoid the consequences of non-payment. Called the Fatherhood Initiative, it provides vocational education, job readiness, job training, job placement and post-employment activities to non-custodial fathers of children receiving or eligible for TANF. Through this program, the City of Little Rock seeks to form a community-wide collaboration that will address the issues facing non-custodial fathers and promote an ethic of responsible fatherhood in our community.

It should be noted that, although called the Fatherhood Initiative, several non-custodial mothers are also enrolled in the program and more will be actively recruited. While the City remains positive about what the Fatherhood Initiative has accomplished so far, it would like to continue the inroads that have been made, and support both parents seeking a responsible relationship with their children.

### **Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students)**

Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) is an innovative program focusing on the prevention of violence in our children's schools. Jim Moore founded the organization in Springdale, Arkansas, in response to the school shooting in nearby Jonesboro. Watch D.O.G.S. seeks to use the positive influence of fathers in schools for a two-fold purpose: 1) to provide an unobtrusive security presence; and 2) to provide a positive and active role model for children at the school. Fathers, stepfathers, and grandfathers are asked to spend at least one day at school volunteering as security monitors, reading mentors, sports referees, listening ears, or whatever needs to be done to plant seeds of success in the lives of children.

These dads are not instructors, nor are they acting as police. Their presence on campus is in line with accomplishing goal #1-increasing student security. However, much more is accomplished than just increased security when dads are on the campus. One of the great benefits is the satisfaction that a dad feels when he completes his investment of a day in the school life of his own child. Watch D.O.G.S. now has school programs in 14 states and is a partner in the Northwest Arkansas Father of the Year Essay Contest.

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## **State of Louisiana**

### **Louisiana Family Council**

The Louisiana Family Council (LFC) is a state-wide non-profit organization whose mission is to "Strengthen Families Throughout Louisiana" by reaching out to parents and their children to provide program and services which allow them to achieve their greatest individual and collective potential, and to prepare them to create and sustain healthy, viable, and stable lives, families, and communities. The Louisiana Family Council is the leader in providing holistic family strengthening and stabilization services, positively impacting citizens of large and small, urban and rural communities throughout Louisiana.

LFC addresses the unique needs of today's ever-changing families. LFC performs its mission through programs of education, training, and increasing public awareness within its three divisions: the Center for Marriage, Center for Fathering, and Center for Mothering. LFC serves as a catalyst for change by empowering families and improving outcomes for children. Programs promote empowerment, self-sufficiency, and family stability by "building strong men and women" and "constructing" them into strong parents and families, which lead to stronger and healthier communities. The Center for Fathering addresses the needs of all fathers, non-custodial and custodial, young and old. In most cases, men have never been taught the importance of being a father.

Programs of the three divisions assist participants in acquiring and upgrading parenting and relationship skills, thus improving the lives of children in fragile families and reducing the risks associated with not having active, involved and committed parents. Programs utilize a holistic "whole-family" approach, addressing the total person: physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. They celebrate family, fatherhood, motherhood, youth, healthy relationships and healthy marriages.

### **Louisiana Family Forum**

In 1998, having recognized the need for a family advocate in Louisiana, a group of pastors, policymakers, and concerned citizens came together to launch Louisiana Family Forum (LFF). Now in its fourth year, Louisiana Family Forum is proud of its growth, accomplishments, and the role it plays in public policy, family-strengthening initiatives across the state.

The LFF's mission is to persuasively present biblical principles in the centers of influence on issues affecting the family through research, communication and networking.

Among their Core Values is the indispensable role of responsible fatherhood & motherhood. They believe that children need a mother and father who are married to one another, each taking an active role in loving and raising their children and that the mother & father should be the primary caregivers, moral teachers and mediators of their children's world.

Accomplishments on past Fatherhood Projects include:

- Assisting the National Center for Fathering in recognizing Louisiana's Father of the Year;
- Strengthening and honoring pastors through a Pastor Appreciation Leadership Luncheon for 70 pastors, featuring Dr. Ken Canfield of the National Center for Fathering;
- Serving as the liaison between judges, district attorneys, public defenders, and other court-related entities to promote the "Fathering Court" concept; and

- Holding a *7 Secrets of Effective Fathering* Seminar in Baton Rouge for 750 moms and dads in which LSU Head Football Coach Nick Saban served as Honorary Chairman.

## **Louisiana State University Agricultural Center**

### *Economic Development and Quality of Life for People and Communities: Fatherhood Development Project*

The Fatherhood Development Project was undertaken by an extension home economist in the Louisiana parish, and involved a series of classes on parenting for young men who have grown up in poverty, and were from abusive homes. The fatherhood development parenting classes targeted low-income men 13-21 years of age in the Tallulah Correctional and Christian Acres Detention Centers. The project served 600 participants, 85 percent African American, 5 percent white and 1 percent other. The fatherhood program was taught in 12 sessions lasting 60-90 minutes. The topics included goals and values, communication, understanding stress, shopping for the right father, the weekend father, play is work, self-esteem, conflict resolution, anger management and changes in people.

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## **State of New Mexico**

### **Men's Resource Center of Northern New Mexico (MRC)**

The Men's Resource Center (MRC) of Northern New Mexico's goal is to support men in being healthy partners, fathers, role models, and community members. The MRC is the first place men in northern New Mexico and beyond are reaching out to for help. MRC serves over 80 people a month in their five programs - including programs for men who want to heal abusive behavior, Young Father's Project, and Drop-in Men's Support Group.

There are five programs at the Men's Resource Center:

- *Drop-in Support Group:* This group is a place for men to talk honestly about their lives and to support each other. It is facilitated by trained volunteers.
- *Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) Program:* MOVE is for men who want to end their abusive behavior towards partners/wives and children.
- *Resource & Referral Program:* In this program, they help people to work through this reluctance and to find resources in their community to address important issues. This might mean finding a counselor, a job, a place to live, a support group, etc. The MRC is one of the first places men in northern New Mexico call when they are voluntarily looking to change their lives.
- *Young Father's Project:* In this program, they work with young dads to help them find the support and resources they need to be great fathers. This includes finding employment, building parenting skills, arranging transportation, seeking education and many other things.
- *Outreach Programs:* The MRC regularly facilitates participatory workshops around issues faced by communities such as healing men's violence, healthy masculinity, healthy relationships and others.

## **New Mexico GRADS Dads/MELD Fatherhood Initiative**

The Mission of the New Mexico GRADS System is to strengthen teenage families and reduce risk-taking behaviors among all youth.

The NM GRADS System:

- Improves the outcome of high risk pregnancies;
- Reduces out-of-wedlock births;
- Strengthens two-parent families in 35 schools;
- Provides on-site childcare;
- Allows teen parents have the opportunity to earn college credit in child care professional courses;
- Includes career exploration component to enhance student employability; and
- Collaborates with CAASA and the ARC of New Mexico (Advocates for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families) to develop regional training and resources to foster student leadership.

GRADS students are trained to develop and make presentations designed to reduce alcohol and substance abuse and the BD associated with them. In collaboration with the Teen Parent AmeriCorps office of the state department of Children, Youth and Families department, the system provides licensed on-site child care lefts for teen parents which allow parents to remain in school. Working to prevent teen pregnancies among non-parenting teens, the GRADS system sponsors an abstinence education program for secondary schools. The state GRADS System has enjoyed legislative support for its self-replicating, self-sustaining, nationally validated teen parent model. Funding has made a transition from a 1999 Special Projects appropriation to inclusion in the 2001 budget of the New Mexico Human Services Department with Welfare Reform funds. These funds flow through the Public Education Department. NM GRADS collaborates with Children, Youth, and Families to fund licensed childcare centers and a Juvenile Justice model of New Mexico Boys School.

## **Embracing Fatherhood Institute**

This program recognizes the critical need for fathers and father-figures to be a part of their children's education and lives. New Mexico PTA and Embracing Fatherhood stress the importance of Dad getting involved. Embracing Fatherhood believes all children need to reap the benefits of father involvement.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Embracing Fatherhood Conference was held on February 7, 2004, at the Hyatt Regency in Albuquerque, NM. This was a one day conference to share knowledge, skills and tools with men to become more engaged in the life of a child. The theme was "Beyond Bringing Home the Bacon: Recognizing the critical influence and impact of a father's role on children's lives."

Seminar topics included:

- "Dragon Tales/Parent Tales, Understanding Children's Behavior"
- Education Plan of NM "Saving for College"
- NM Young Fathers Project "Challenges of a Young Father"
- "Maternal and Paternal Parenting Styles"
- "Ready To Learn—Ideas and Activities to Engage Your Child"
- "The Allure of Gangs and Their Dynamics"
- "Asking the Right Questions—Navigating Health Care and the Education System"
- "He Said, She Said—Gender Communication"
- "Best Practices for Father Involvement in Schools"

- “Can We Talk? Strategies on How to Get Your Children to Talk to You”
- “Learn to Recognize Trouble Before it Starts”

## **Youth Development, Inc. (YDI)**

### YDI Head Start/Early Head Start Father Initiative Program

Tim Lopez heads up the HS/EHS Male Valued Partnership (M.V.P.) Program. Its key goal is to involve fathers and other male care givers in Head Start/Early Head Start and other parent training events. The M.V.P. program actively encourages men to become a part of their children's lives. Males learn skills which make it easier for them to interact with their children in a nurturing manner and feel comfortable taking a greater responsibility in child rearing. They are often surprised how much it means to their children to have them in their classroom for an hour. The program focuses on teaching leadership, teamwork, parenting, role-modeling skills and is culturally relevant. It also provides coping strategies for dealing with family issues and ways of improving the participants' parenting skills. Classes are scheduled in the evening when more men are likely to be able to attend.

## **New Mexico Young Fathers Project**

The mission of the New Mexico Young Fathers Project (NMYFP) is to promote social and family stability by improving the quality of father/child relationships in young families and by preventing repeat pregnancies. The New Mexico Young Fathers Project is a program which helps young fathers under the age of 26. Participants receive individual case management, mentorship and learn life skills in groups with other young fathers. They receive training in parenting, relationship skills and decision making. Participants also learn to navigate systems that impact their families and improve employment outcomes. Some participants are trained to become peer mentors/educators and conduct presentations to other young fathers and community groups. The Young Fathers Project supports and acknowledges young men for taking on the responsibilities of providing a better life for themselves and their children.

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## **State of Oklahoma**

### **Oklahoma Family Policy Council (OFPC)**

#### Dads & Daughters Report

Oklahoma Family Policy Council (OFPC) released its new, cutting-edge research-based report written especially for fathers and daughters. Uniquely written from a daughter's perspective, this practical, insightful, 33-page report called *Dads and Daughters* gives valuable information to both fathers and daughters about how they can best strengthen this special, life-long, dad-daughter relationship.

The Oklahoma Family Policy Council (OFPC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, research, education and communications organization working to strengthen families in Oklahoma through informed citizenship, community involvement and improved public policy.

## **Offender Fatherhood Initiative**

Oklahoma County Community Corrections/Residential Services was honored to host Mr. Charles Stuart, Executive Director of the Incarcerated Fatherhood Program for the National Fatherhood Initiative, as he presented the Long Distance Dads training on May 26, 27, and 28, 2004. Debbie Mahaffey, Deputy Director of Operations Support, Reginald Hines, Assistant Deputy Director, Community Corrections Division and Ruby Jones-Cooper, District Supervisor, Oklahoma County Community Corrections/Residential Services were all present to welcome and encourage the participants in their efforts to provide inmates with the tools and skills they will need in their efforts to transition back into the community setting.

There were twenty-nine participants from across the state, including two from the Oklahoma Halfway House, one from United Methodist Church, as well as one participant from the Illinois Department of Corrections, two from the South Dakota Department of Corrections and two from Washington State Department of Corrections. The Long Distance Dads program is a twelve week program that can be adjusted to fit shorter time frames. The primary focus is on the following issues:

- Promoting responsible fatherhood and holistic parenting;
- Empowering fathers to assume emotional, moral, spiritual, psychological and financial responsibility for their children;
- Accentuating the psycho-social development of both father and child;
- Meeting the psychological and physiological challenges of parenting; and
- Increasing and contributing to the knowledgebase that concerns fatherhood.

Oklahoma Department of Corrections staff receiving this training will eventually be responsible for training inmates who will facilitate this program on a peer basis to other inmates. The Oklahoma City Community Corrections Center began facilitating their first group during the first week of July, 2004. Enid Community Corrections Center's project is currently underway with their first group and has a projected completion date in August. Marshall County Community Work Center began their first group July 28, 2004, and Healdton Community Work Center was targeted to start the middle of July for their first group. All of the participants contacted were positive about this program and its potential in the continuing commitment to inmate transitioning into the community environment.

### **Oklahoma Department of Human Services**

The [OKParent](#) Web is presented by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to provide Oklahoma families with current information on parenting and child care. This site is produced in cooperation with Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla., and Extension Educators in each county office, who provide Oklahoma families with current information on parenting and child care offering tips and advice, and helping father's with parenting skills, health and fitness. They also offer World Wide Web Resources on Fatherhood.

### **Family & Children's Services of Tulsa Oklahoma**

Family & Children's Services is one of the premier human service providers in Northeastern Oklahoma. The agency provides counseling services, parenting education, child abuse prevention and treatment, literacy programs, marriage and family strengthening programs, early childhood family support, youth development programs and mental health services. Last year the programs touched more than 60,000 lives. Family & Children's Services partners with families, schools, business and other organizations to share resources and develop comprehensive solutions to the problems that threaten the well-being of families and the community.



The agency is accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services and is a member of the Alliance for Children and Families, the Tulsa Area United Way and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. F&CS Mental Health Care is certified as a community mental health center by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

### **The Oklahoma Fatherhood Consortium (OFC) and Oklahoma Fatherhood Program (OFP)**

The Oklahoma Fatherhood Consortium (OFC) and Oklahoma Fatherhood Program (OFP) are subsidiaries of COPE, Inc., a non-profit 501 (c)(3) Multi-Cultural Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic. The goal of OFC is to improve the well being of children by improving the number of children growing up with committed, involved and responsible fathers and to increase societal attention to the crisis of father absence. Through community forums, media campaigns and public advocacy these programs will foster discussion and action about the issues of fatherhood at the community, national, personal, and state level.

The OFP consists of several programs:

- Fatherhood Skills Training

*Fatherhood skills training* is designed to facilitate organizations interested in starting seminars at schools, in the workplace, and in other places where fathers are found.

- Incarcerated Fathers

*Incarcerated fathers program* keeps incarcerated fathers connected with their children. It provides fatherhood training to long-term inmates as well as those being released from prison in order to maintain the parent-child bond and decrease the likelihood that the parent will return to prison.

- Low Income / Teen Fathers

*Low-income / teen fathers* are provided with a variety of services and supports including: counseling, educational / vocational training, and mentoring, as well as peer support groups.

- New / Expectant Fathers

*New / expectant fathers program* is designed to help those fathers develop the skills necessary to be effective fathers. In the case of unwed fathers, this program also seeks to encourage the establishment of paternity. By establishing a secure father-child bond early, fathers are more likely to maintain healthy, long-term, responsible relationships with their children.

### **American Indian Fatherhood Project**

The American Indian Fatherhood Project (AIFP) was originally based at the University of Oklahoma and is now based at Wake Forest University. From 1998 through 2000, this project conducted 375 interviews with 204 Chickasaw, Kiowa, Comanche and Apache subjects (80% men and 20% women) on the topics of fatherhood and masculinity and employed two full-time ethnographers who lived and carried out participant-observation in these communities. The Kiowas, Comanches and Fort Sill Apaches are considered to be a Plains Indian coalition and are referred to locally as the KCAs. Their interviews primarily took place in the five-county area in and around Apache, Anadarko, Carnegie and Lawton. The Chickasaw participants were interviewed in twelve rural counties in south central Oklahoma, especially in the Ada and Tishomingo areas.

All but one of the project's 15 interviewers were Indian, and most were from the participating communities. The male participants in the study were biological and/or social fathers of Indian children; the women were biological and/or social mothers of Indian children. Indian blood quantum (degree of Indian ancestry) and tribal affiliation(s) were self-reported. The study included representatives of all socioeconomic categories, and participants ranged in age from 18 to 87.

Community members were involved in designing this project as well as carrying it out. Focus groups from each community, including representatives of tribal government, worked with researchers on the design of each of two interview instruments (lists of questions). These focus groups continued to meet monthly while the research was being conducted. The researchers also held events designed to provide project results and benefits to the communities, such as *Oklahoma Indian Fathers: A Celebration of Tradition*, a day-long celebration and educational event, featuring free health screenings, workshops, and a fun run.

### **The Empowerment Network (TEN)**

The Empowerment Network (TEN) is a resource hub for state legislators, grassroots organizations, and other civic leaders promoting American family and community renewal of civil society in the 21st century. TEN's grassroots network provides the winning edge on policy initiatives that support youth character and family revitalization, entrepreneurship and the unleashing of faith-based initiatives and cultural remedies.

#### *Empowerment 2001 Blueprint*

#### Strategies for Family and Community Renewal in a New American Century

The Empowerment Network (TEN) presented its Empowerment 2001 Blueprint as a platform for discussion and action at three levels: federal policy, state initiatives, and community activism aimed at renewing civil society through strengthened families and efforts of faith-based and grassroots community organizations. Blueprint contains cutting edge innovations proposed by top grassroots and national and state leaders; case studies and "best practices;" and step-by-step policy recommendations.

Their policy platform consists of five planks:

- Strengthening Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood
- Unleashing the Potential of Faith-Based Initiatives
- Stemming Youth Violence through Opportunities, Family Connectedness, and Right Choices
- Advancing Asset Empowerment and Community Renewal
- Civil Society Renewal and Innovative Philanthropy

Over 100 leading community, state and national leaders contributed to these recommendations through a series of roundtables and interviews, discussion papers and Internet exchanges, and local grassroots site visits. Individual TEN Board and Leadership Roundtable members and other contributors do not necessarily endorse the totality of policy recommendations.

### **The Fathers Count Act**

The Fathers Count Act of 1999, will fund projects to help low-income fathers meet their responsibilities by promoting marriage, better parenting, and economic advancement. Welfare reform stimulated the development of an extensive array of services for welfare-dependent mothers-services that have helped these mothers obtain the knowledge necessary to succeed by finding a job, working, and in many cases acquiring the skills and experience needed to advance to better jobs.

The Fathers Count Act is an attempt to provide the same support and opportunity to low-income fathers. The goal is to help fathers find steady employment and develop their careers so they can provide the economic support so crucial to the child's well-being. In addition, they help fathers develop a better relationship with their child and the child's mother.

The Fathers Count bill provides a substantial amount of money (about \$150 million over 6 years) to encourage community-based organizations and government agencies to conduct projects to help these young parents. Projects are awarded on a competitive basis. Not only do the projects aim to help the couples develop healthy relationships, including marriage, but they also provide the educational opportunities and other supports through which parenting can be improved and the earning power of fathers increased.

### **Delta Community Action Head Start Fatherhood Initiative (Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies)**

#### *M.A.L.E. Initiative*

Fathers, grandfathers and other male role models from the Early Childhood Learning Center in Maysville met for a "Breakfast of Heroes." The breakfast was one of a series of special events planned by Delta Community Action's Head Start as part of its Fatherhood Initiative. The Maysville center is a collaborative effort of Delta and the public schools. Dubbed the M.A.L.E. Initiative, which stands for "Males Add Love and Encouragement," the activities were developed at the center level to be responsive to the fathers that are striving to connect with their children. Maysville Athletic Director Brad O'Steen spoke about the importance of a positive male role model in the life of a child. He also urged them to help children choose their friends wisely.

Other events included "Birdhouse Building" in Blanchard, "Donuts with Dad" in Duncan, Marlow, Pauls Valley, Purcell and Stratford. In Lindsay, the children and their dads play games together. This initiative is striving to encourage positive male role models to increase the level of attention and interaction with their children, not only in the home setting but in the educational arena as well. Approximately 35 people attended the breakfast in this small rural community.

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## **State of Texas**

### **Texas Fatherhood Campaign (TFC)**

The Texas Fatherhood Campaign is a statewide, region-by-region effort to positively impact fathers and their children. Through public messages and local fatherhood conferences, fathers learn of the powerful impact they have on their children, including the devastating effects of father-absence. The TFC is led by *Free Market Foundation*, a non-profit educational foundation based in Plano, Texas dedicated to "Protecting Freedoms and Strengthening Families."

The goal of the Texas Fatherhood Campaign is two-fold:

- To saturate the state of Texas with the heartbreaking facts of fatherlessness sending the message, "Your kids need you!"; and
- To provide resources through literature, conferences, public service announcements, etc., that are intended to encourage better relationships for fathers and their children including regional fatherhood conferences.

To commemorate Father's Day, *Free Market Foundation and the Texas Dads Campaign* hosted a Father's Day Bash on Sunday, June 20, 2004, at the NRH2O Family Water Park. Families from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex enjoyed the waterslides, lazy river, wave pool and the world's largest water playground! The first 100 fathers got in free and the day focused on fathers spending time with their children. Games, such as a water balloon toss, hula hoop contest and three-leg race, were scheduled during the afternoon and parent-child teams competed for prizes. This event provided an opportunity for fathers and their families to have a fun day together while continuing to promote the important role fathers play in the lives of their children.

## **Project Alpha**

This collaborative project of the March of Dimes and *Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.* is designed to provide education, motivation and skill-building on issues of responsibility, relationships, teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases for young males ages 12-15 years. Project Alpha seeks to create a safe environment where young men can learn about and explore issues of sexuality, manhood, relationships and fatherhood. This provides the foundation for reaching the program's three goals:

- Sharing knowledge - combating ignorance and fear with factual information;
- Changing attitudes - providing motivation toward positive changes in sexual behavior; and
- Building skills - creating a sense of empowerment that allows participants to act in ways that support their goals and values.

### *Program Highlights*

- Provides education for young males 12-15 years old on sexuality, fatherhood and the role of males in relationships;
- Motivates young men to make decisions about their goals and values, and act in ways that support their decisions; and
- Builds young men's skills through role-playing. Utilizes appropriate male role models and mentors.

### *Project Alpha Curriculum*

The Project Alpha curriculum focuses on five key topics:

- Responsibility, Respect and the Role of Males in Relationships
- Adolescent Pregnancy and Fatherhood
- Protecting Yourself and Your Partner
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Intimate Violence in Relationships

In North Texas, the Xi Tau Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and the March of Dimes North Texas Division sponsored a Project Alpha event on May 3, 2003. Also, in 2003, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity agreed to become a national Prematurity Campaign Alliance member committed to assist the March of Dimes in communicating prematurity awareness and educational messages and working toward reducing the rate of premature birth.

## **San Antonio's Fatherhood Campaign, sponsored in part by American Indians in Texas and Making Connections of San Antonio**

The campaign is a local initiative dedicated to bringing new positive awareness to the importance of families and fatherhood, as well as providing helpful resources for fathers, grandfathers and surrogate fathers. One objective of the Fatherhood Campaign is to tie together services, promote

fatherhood events and seek more participation and funding for these activities. An events calendar is being coordinated by the Fatherhood Campaign in partnership with the agencies who have or will have upcoming activities pertaining to fathers and children.

A *Fatherhood Hotline*, (210) 227-3463, has been established. Fathers calling the hotline will receive information on programs, classes and support groups available in San Antonio. They may also be referred to agencies that offer fatherhood programs, classes and support groups.

Initial campaign funding has been obtained from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This funding will help pay for billboards, brochures, posters and for a staffed Fatherhood Hotline that can provide information and referral to callers. Callers can be routed to agencies that already have existing fatherhood programs.

### **The Men & Fathers Resource Center (MFRC)**

The Men & Fathers Resource Center (MFRC) comprises several affiliated organizations and programs, some of which have served men and fathers for three decades. The Center is unreservedly male-positive and father-friendly.

The MFRC provides resource development, housing, services, staff and equipment to male-positive organizations, agencies and professionals, and provides services in a supportive, professional and knowledgeable manner to clients. In carrying out its mission, the Center also acts as a community education and public awareness resource on men and their concerns.

The Center provides offices, personnel, equipment and services to several organizations. Either through its own programs, or through its component organizations, the Center offers free and low-cost family law services for fathers, inexpensive DNA testing, support groups, parenting training, professional referral banks, a nationwide crisis line for men with family issues, and continuing legislative liaison and public awareness programs. Speakers are available on men's concerns and fathering issues, and the Center has established an extensive media awareness program.

The MFRC is an incorporated organization that serves as the focus for several male-positive, father-friendly organizations and programs. Chief among them, and the oldest at 32 years, is *LoneStar Fatherhood Initiative* (LSFI). LSFI offers attorney consultations, preparation of legal documents, strategic planning, and referrals to lawyers for its members. Through unincorporated programs called *The Father's Connection* and *DNA for Dads*, LSFI offers a peer support group facilitated by a licensed therapist, and the country's most affordable DNA testing.

### **Strong Fathers-Strong Families**

Strong Fathers - Strong Families is dedicated to improving the lives of children by strengthening fathers and families for children and believe that children need fathers as well as mothers and they need for their fathers to be strong.

Strong Fathers-Strong Families work to help fathers be strong in their commitment, strong in their involvement, strong in their skills as fathers, and strong in their families. It is their goal to work with, as well as learn from fathers across the spectrum to help families (all types of families) become a stronger support for their children.

Strong Fathers-Strong Families is headed up by J. Michael Hall M.Ed., who has been a Special Projects Coordinator for the Center for Successful Fathering, as well as a Resource Speaker for men's groups and churches. He has presented in workshops and conferences from California to New York and from Fargo, North Dakota to the Laredo, Texas area, is committed to fathers and families and works to maintain the balance of his passion for fathers and families with the passion

he has for his own family. He works as a catalyst for strengthening fathers to be stronger for their children and be builders and maintainers of strong families. He is a member of the Partnership for Children, the Tarrant County Fatherhood Coalition, The Healthy Families Advisory Board, the National Head Start Association, as well as on advisory boards for local family initiatives and special schools. He is considered a gifted speaker and presenter and is known for his fiery red hair and his sense of humor. Evaluations from his many workshops make note of his humor and his passion for kids and their families.

J. Michael Hall M.Ed. is presently available for workshops, conferences, Barbeques, and Bar Mitzvahs.

### **The Texas Department of Health, Office of Special Projects**

The Texas Department of Health, Office of Special Projects, manages five innovative male involvement/fatherhood demonstration projects, which are Title X funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Population Affairs, Public Health Region VI. The projects are located in Houston (year five- community based), Austin, (year four - school based) and San Antonio, El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley (year two - school and community based). The major goal of these projects is to help young fathers and young males who are at risk of becoming fathers, to access services that will enable their ability to function as responsible fathers and young adults. This goal is achieved by improving the health status of the young men through:

- Continued education (tutoring, GED & College preparation)
- Health Education
- Health promotion
- Job training and referral
- Mental health and other social services
- Mentoring
- Parent/child education and outings
- Paternity establishment
- Referrals to health services
- Support Groups
- Volunteerism

#### *Projects*

##### *Austin - East Austin Male Involvement Project (EAMIP)*

The East Austin Male Involvement Project targets teen males, ages 13-17, in the Johnston High School / East Austin Area. This project is a multi-agency pregnancy prevention effort with LifeWorks: Alliance of Youth & Family Services (lead agency), Communities in Schools, and People's Community Clinic. This endeavor is supported by a Title X Family Planning grant, which is administered by the Texas Department of Health.

The project uses the Developmental Assets theory as its model. A variety of services such as mentoring, school support, job readiness, family communication, volunteerism, relationship building, as well as health information are combined to address the high teen pregnancy and STD rates in this area. The primary goals are to serve 125 young people who show an interest in participating in this all-male project and to perform outreach services targeted to educate 500 male youth in the Austin area through community dialogue. Pregnancy prevention and health promotion information is spread to the peers, parents, and partners of the teen males in the target area, through family involvement, community events, service learning projects, educational awareness, and peer education. The East Austin Male Involvement Project includes the following services:

- Support groups
- Job readiness training
- Free health screenings
- School based mentors
- Employment opportunities
- Family involvement activities
- Agency referrals

#### San Antonio - Rites of Passage (ROP) Project

The American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions is the lead agency for this culturally sensitive pregnancy prevention project developed for young Native American/Hispanic males in San Antonio. In November 2000, a coalition was formed to assist the agency in developing the goals and objectives of the "Rites of Passage" Project. They are a small grass roots organization with strong connections to the community. Project activities are being held in both schools and community centers after school and on weekends. Adult male involvement and teaching through example make up a key component of this project to:

- Assure access to services for males who are fathers or who are at risk of becoming fathers;
- Increase male involvement in the promotion of healthy lifestyles;
- Strengthen the relationship of young men to self, family and community; and
- Mobilize the Coalition's commitment to support male involvement for teen pregnancy prevention and other risk behaviors.

The ROP program is administered in cycles composed of four interactive components:

- *El Joven Noble Curriculum* - A 10 session rites of passage process based on culturally rooted concepts and on the values of indigenous teachings and writings of the ancestors of the Chicano, Latino, Hispanic and Native American people. The Curriculum serves as the basis for guiding youth through a Character development and Manhood process.
- *Compadres Network* (Extended Kinship) – Provides mentors, leaders and guides in culturally enhancing activities, campouts, annual retreats, and the organization of a graduation ceremony upon completion of El Joven Noble curriculum.
- *Circulo de Hombres* (Circle of Men) – A male support group where young men are integrated with adult male role models in a forum that allows working out problems and difficulties within the group itself.
- *Health Education* - Planned Parenthood of San Antonio and ROP staff host two reproductive health activities at each site, per cycle, and one annual health fair. The activities promote healthy life styles among young male participants. Participants also receive interactive education on STD, HIV/AIDS, tobacco and substance abuse.

#### El Paso - Young Fathers Project

The El Paso Young Fathers Project (EPYFP) is an evaluated project that provides a combination of educational, occupational, and prevention services to help young fathers ages 15-25 improve their economic, social and familial situation.

The goals of the EPYFP emphasize health, legal responsibility, employment and pregnancy prevention. These goals integrate essential fatherhood components which are designed to:

- Help young fathers become more involved in their children's lives;
- Take financial and emotional responsibility for their children;

- Postpone additional children until they are financially and emotionally prepared to support them; and
- Help young men at-risk of becoming fathers obtain the skills and knowledge needed to make responsible choices.

Young fathers need assistance and support to make the transition from adolescence to responsible parenthood and adulthood. The El Paso Young Fathers Project creates a supportive environment where young fathers have:

- The opportunity to spend time with others who are dealing with similar issues and problems;
- Support when feeling overwhelmed with emotions that many men are not comfortable expressing; and
- Access to professional counselors, advocates and workers in the legal and social service field.

The El Paso Fatherhood Coalition provides networking and information sharing opportunities for agencies that provide services to young fathers in El Paso. The coalition also provides direction and guidance to the project. The goal of the coalition is to bridge gaps in resources and/or services all young fathers.

#### Rio Grande Valley (RGV) - Men Making a Difference(MMAD)

“Men Making a Difference” is a federally funded project designed to aid in the prevention of teenage fatherhood by providing education and services to the male population between the ages of 13 to 21. The project offers intensive case management, parenting education, high school and college educational presentations, job search assistance, resume writing, job application assistance and helps participants prepare for job interviews.

The youth activities and Fatherhood Development curriculum are utilized to help create a supportive environment in which young males have the opportunity to spend time with other men dealing with similar issues, access to support groups, counselors and other community resources. The project curriculum is broken into five core sessions that address personal development, communication and decision-making skills, being a responsible father, relationships, as well as sexuality and health education.

The Rio Grande Valley Male Involvement Coalition oversees the program and provides valuable recommendations and services to the MMAD participants. All coalition members are volunteers and professionals in their own field. The membership meets on a quarterly basis to provide guidance, assistance and recommendations to the MMAD staff to insure that services are being provided to the program participants as needed. The coalition applicants are accepted into the membership based on their backgrounds, areas of expertise and available professional services to benefit the participants and their families.

#### **Texas Males Care's (TMC)**

Texas Males Care's (TMC) mission is to enhance and promote communication about the positive contributions that young men in Texas can make to family planning, child rearing, reproductive and sexual health, preventing unwanted pregnancy and sexually passed infections.

A growing number of family planning providers, other providers of reproductive-health care, and social service agencies have designed interventions to increase young men's participation in public health and other social issues. Preventing unintended pregnancies and sexually passed infections, ending violence in relationships, and fatherhood to name a few. There is a growing base of knowledge to be shared in an effort to:



- Increase male-focused programs;
- Improve current programs; and
- Effectively compete for public and private funds.

The Texas Males Care web site will: facilitate communication about what works in creating male-focused programs; keep you up to date on the latest trends, facts, concerns, and funding opportunities; and enhance your ability to be more effective as an agent of change.

#### 2004 Boot Camp for New Dads Workshops

Boot Camp for New Dads is an innovative workshop for new and expectant fathers. Led by experienced dads and their babies, this program enables men to step up to the challenges of being an involved father and feel confident about bringing their new babies home from the hospital. Each workshop lasts approximately 2-3 hours, and is offered at least once a month through the Central Texas Fatherhood Initiative at both Hillcrest and Providence Hospitals in Waco, as well as Scott & White Hospital in Temple.

### **The WorkSource Fatherhood Initiative**

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization (IRFFR) is a faith-based, non-profit, national organization that seeks to promote responsible fatherhood in at-risk, low-income families. The organization operates programs in major cities around the United States to help employ fathers who are behind in child support responsibilities. The Institute's efforts directly benefit taxpayers by reducing the added tax burden of fatherless homes. As employment and job training play a vital role in the success of this program, The WorkSource established a Fatherhood Initiative in 2001 to bring the program to Galveston County and Houston. Currently, the Midtown, Galveston and Texas City offices of The WorkSource are involved with the coordination of Fatherhood Initiative services. Potential clients, referred to as protégés, may be referred from any of the 30 career offices. Many of the people working for the Fatherhood Initiative are former protégés themselves who have been able to successfully form a relationship with their own families through this program. Their interest in helping others and their own experiences allow them to establish a common bond and trust with newer protégés. Through this trust, a father becomes willing to accept help and the job training and counseling necessary to become employed. Once employed, the father is better able to improve his relationship with his children and family.

The success rate of The WorkSource – Fatherhood Initiative program since its inception in the region is exceeding expectations. The annual program goal is to serve 100 fathers and employ 68 percent of those served. To date, the Houston area offices have employed more than 60 protégés, of which 90 percent have been employed at least six months.

### **Child Crisis Center of El Paso**

The mission of the Child Crisis Center is to prevent child abuse and/or neglect and to support parents in the El Paso community. The Child Crisis Center is a nonprofit, nonsecretarian agency, which provides an emergency home for infants and children of parents who are temporarily unable to cope with their responsibilities and who need relief while they resolve their personal problems. The Center is the "family" or "friendly neighbor" that many parents need in time of stress.

The Crisis Center now has a twenty-three year history of providing crisis shelter care to young children. The Center continues to develop progressive and innovative approaches to working with families and children. The following services are provided to families throughout the El Paso community.

### *Padres del Norte Fatherhood Enrichment Program*

The mission of the *Padres del Norte Fatherhood Enrichment Program* is "To enrich children's lives by improving and increasing their father's involvement in their development" through the following services:

- *Dads Tool Box*

*Dads Tool Box* uses the "Foundations of Fatherhood" curricula provided by the National Fatherhood Initiative, "Raising Children with PRIDE" by the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, and the "Fatherhood Development Curriculum" from NPCL. *Dads Tool Box* also provides group sessions for grandfathers, stepfathers, fathers, fathers to be, teen fathers, and single fathers. These group sessions provide the men a "Circulo" or support network among each other. They learn to grow together and learn from each other.

- *Padres Jovenes - Teen Father Component*

The *Padres Jovenes - Teen Fatherhood Component* works with the teen fathers at their school. If the father is not in school, home visits or other arrangements to meet with the father will be made. *Padres Jovenes* uses the "Joven Noble", "Raising Children with PRIDE" curricula provided by the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, as well as the "Fatherhood Development Curriculum" provided by NPCL\* to address the concerns of the teen father. *Teen Dad Camp* is a graduation ceremony for the teen fathers who have completed the *Padres Jovenes* group sessions. The ceremony is a full day of information pertaining to the "Rights of Passage" to manhood/fatherhood. Teen Dad Camp was made possible with the collaboration of the El Paso Independent School District and the YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region.

- *Abuelos con Carino*

The *Abuelos con Cariño Program* offers:

- Grandparent Education Classes
- Support Network for Grandparents
- Grandchild Development (Birth to Adolescence)
- Special classes for Grandfathers
- Early Stimulation Activities (Reading/Singing/Talking/Playing)
- Physical Fitness Activities (Grandparents & Grandchildren)
- Healthy Eating Habits (Grandparents & Grandchildren)

- *Family Reintegration Program - Incarcerated Fatherhood Component*

The *Family Reintegration Program - Incarcerated Fatherhood Component* focuses on helping the father and the family prepare for the release of the father from jail/prison back into society and their family. The project also helps the incarcerated father with issues pertaining to child support and paternity in conjunction to the Office of Attorney General. The program also serves as a link between the father and his family, and also a network of community based programs. The program uses the "Long Distance Dad's" curriculum provided by the National Fatherhood Initiative, "Raising Children with PRIDE" and "El Hombre Noble Buscando Balance" from the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute.

- *Keynote & Workshops*

Keynote & Workshop topics include:

- Teen Fatherhood
- Fathers influence on a child's education
- Incarcerated Fathers
- Working with Hispanic Fathers
- Developing a Fatherhood Program
- Is your Agency Father Friendly?
- Fatherhood and Positive Discipline
- Fathers influence on Child Development

## **Family Forward**

Family Forward® is a statewide 501c(3) nonprofit organization in continuous operation since 1979. Agency programs and services are provided through a diverse network of partners strategically located in communities of need across the state. Family Forward® provides parenting education and support for fathers. Family Forward® is affiliated with other organizations that empower fathers such as; the National Fatherhood Initiative and the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. Family Forward® fatherhood initiatives are designed to help fathers become responsible parents to their children by helping them to understand the importance of fathers in the lives of their children.

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